

- Hall Gives an A+ to Program that Could Help Offset Local Property Tax Burden, Boost the Economy, and Modernize Schools -

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) today announced a new federal program that would provide billions of dollars in Federal funding to help schools pay for construction that incorporates energy-efficient, “green” construction and design. The program was created by the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act, legislation that recently passed the House. The legislation authorizes \$6.4 billion in grants to school districts for use in repairing, modernizing, and greening schools. “Green” buildings can have higher initial construction costs, but much lower operating costs over time. The Federal funding will help lower the property tax burden to local taxpayers for such buildings. “In an area that’s growing as quickly as the Hudson Valley, the demand for clean, safe school space is only going to increase in the years ahead,” stated Congressman Hall. “School construction is costly and property tax payers are already being asked to foot too much of the bill under the unfunded mandates of No Child Left Behind. That’s why I’m glad that this legislation authorizes direct federal assistance to take some of the pressure off of the local tax burden.”

The majority of funding in the 21st Century High Performing Public School Facilities Act is directed to improvements that line up with green building standards and can also be used for the installation of renewable power like solar panels. If fully funded, New York is projected to receive roughly \$586 million in fiscal year 2009 to provide grants to schools for these improvements. Ten thousand well-paid “green” jobs for roofing contractors, construction workers, architects and engineers would also be created in New York.

“Making our schools more energy efficient will make them healthier, more valuable to our communities, and reduce operating costs, creating a win-win-win scenario,” said Hall. The legislation is now headed to the Senate for further consideration.

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